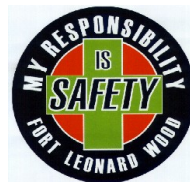




# Safety Alert 05-19

## Personal Lightning Safety



18 August 2005

A typical lightning bolt discharges roughly 10 to 30 million volts, and can carry as much as 100 million! This is approximately the voltage created by a small nuclear power plant. The temperature of a bolt of lightning reaches 60,000 degrees Fahrenheit, five



times hotter than the surface of the sun!

Lightning kills around 100 persons per year in the United States and injures about 250. On average, it kills more people every year than tornadoes and hurricanes combined!

### **THERE ARE SOME THINGS WE CAN DO, TO LESSEN THE CHANCES OF BEING STRUCK BY LIGHTNING.**

1. When a thunderstorm threatens, don't wait until it arrives to take action. Seek shelter promptly.
2. The best place to go is inside a home or large building.

Structures like bus shelters, outhouses, lean-to shelters, gazebos, tents, or any small nonmetal structures do NOT give adequate lightning protection.

Once inside a building, do not use the phone. Stay away from windows, metal doors, and electrical appliances, and do not use sinks, showers, or bathtubs.

3. If unable to get inside a building, the next best option is an all-metal vehicle, but NOT a convertible.

Avoid contact with metal or other parts of the vehicle, including the radio, that may be conducting paths leading outside.

Keep the windows up.

4. If you are caught outside, dense woods are relatively safe, but do not stand close to any of the trees.

If you are caught in a large open area, go to a ditch, ravine, or other low place, and crouch down.

Do NOT lie flat on ground. Keep your hands off the ground.

Keep in mind that you should not stay in a low-lying area, such as a ravine, gully, or ditch, if it begins to rain hard. Flash flooding kills more people than lightning.

5. Avoid open fields, hilltops, isolated trees, the tallest tree in a grove, poles, and water.

Also avoid outdoor sports. Especially avoid holding golf clubs, baseball bats, fishing rods, and other metal objects that may act as lightning rods.

Stay away from all parking lots, flagpoles, posts, railroad tracks, and large metal objects – such as farm tractors, clotheslines, and metal fences.

Avoid holding an umbrella, which may act as a lightning rod.

6. If you are on bleachers, get off them quickly.

7. Groups of people should disperse quickly.

8. If you are outside and you feel static electricity or your hair stands on end, indicating that lightning is about to strike, drop to your knees and bend forward, putting your hands on your knees. AVOID contacting the ground with your hands and do NOT lie flat on the ground.

## **MANSCEN SAFETY OFFICE**